

**SO THAT WE DON'T FOOL
OURSELVES -- AGAIN:
STUDY NOTES ON
SECURE COMMUNICATION**



Study Notes Series

SPEAR AND SHIELD PUBLICATIONS

So That We Don't Fool Ourselves -- Again: Study Notes On Secure Communications.

Table of Contents

Introduction Atiba Shanna	i
Notes on Secure Communication Seldom Seen	1
Reflections on Victor Serge's WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT (STATE) REPRESSION Ata Kawali	8
So That We Don't Fool Ourselves -- Again Seldom Seen	14
The Greater Need -- An Open Letter Iyapo Tsukama	16

Single Copies: \$2.00
Prisoners: \$1.00
Bulk Prices Available

SPEAR AND SHIELD PUBLICATIONS
1340 W. IRVING PARK, SUITE 108
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60613

AS NEW AFRIKAN COMMUNISTS....

The comrades here represent a small, **INDEPENDENT**, group of New Afrikan communists. They are an active force in the struggle for national liberation and socialism, but are not affiliated with any other organized New Afrikan formation (i.e., the Provisional Government, or the New Afrikan People's Organization).

Atiba Shanna -- New Afrikan Communist

INTRODUCTION

We originally asked another comrad to write the Introduction to this collection of Study Notes. Part of his reply to our request was: "Anybody needing an introduction ain't ready for what you're saying, and an introduction won't help. Anybody prepared to accept what you're saying, don't need an introduction."

He also included the following passage from George Jackson's **PRISON LETTERS**, saying "This can serve as an intro for those who need one. George laid this out fifteen years ago, and we ain't caught up to IT yet."

*...[I]t should never be easy for them to destroy us. If you start with Malcolm X and count ALL of the brothers [and sisters] who have died or been captured since, you will find that not even one of them was really **PREPARED** for a fight. No imagination or fighting style was evident in any one of the incidents. But each one that died professed to know the nature of our enemies. It should never be easy for them. Edward V. Hanrahan, Illinois State Attorney General, sent fifteen pigs to raid the Panther headquarters and murder Hampton and Clark. Do you have any idea what would have happened to those fifteen pigs if they had run into as many Viet Cong as there were Panthers in that building. The VC are all little people with less general education than we have. The argument that they have been doing it longer has no validity at all, because they were doing it just as well when they started as they are now. It's very contradictory for a [person] to teach about the murder in corporate capitalism, to isolate and expose the murderers behind it, to instruct that these madmen are completely without stops, are licentious -- totally depraved -- and then not make adequate preparations to defend [oneself] from the madman's attack. Either they don't really believe their own spiel or they harbor some sort of subconscious death wish.*

(SOLEDAD BROTHER: THE PRISON LETTERS OF GEORGE JACKSON, pps. 217-218)

We decided to use some of the comrad's words and the passage from **SOLEDAD BROTHER** as part of this Introduction, because they can help us emphasize the context within which these Notes should be read and studied.

I

These Notes were written as part of a broader project of reorientation and reorganization, a process through which we've been slowly moving for the past several years. Briefly stated, the process aims to generate a new revolutionary movement.

One major aspect of the process involves a type of rectification, whereby we review and reassess the fundamental components of revolutionary scientific socialism (i.e., "Marxism-Leninism"), and other forms of intellectual activity relative to the revolutionary process (i.e., ideology, theory). Another major aspect of the process involves the physical (re)organization and mobilization of cadre and mass forces.

We recognized the need for reorientation and reorganization after concluding that the strategic and tactical shortcomings and defeats of the New Afrikan (and the reformist "black liberation") movement over the past quarter-century were the results of internal weaknesses.

In mid-1985, only the die-hards refuse to admit that the "black liberation" and New Afrikan movements have come "full circle," and that, in effect, what we see now, in the form of activity and organization, are merely remnants of an exhausted phase of struggle, and of a dying movement.

We believe that the shortcomings and decay of the old movement were primarily caused by internal weaknesses, and only secondarily by the repression of the movement by the u.s. imperialist state and other objective conditions. For this reason, the generation of a new, sustained, revolutionary phase and movement must begin with conscious and systematic attention to those internal forces that are the basis of change and development.

The title for this collection of Notes was chosen because we think it implies -- in a tongue-in-cheek manner -- the underlying rationale for the particular subject (the need for secure movement com-

i

munication), and the rationale for the overall reorientation and reorganization process.

Many of us, even today, will scoff at the mere suggestion that the kind of discussion undertaken by these Notes should be among the first steps taken in the process of generating revolutionary consciousness, and of building a new revolutionary movement.

We believe that such discussion is not only necessary in and of itself, but also as a means of dramatizing the sharp reality of conditions and the nature of the contradiction between ourselves and the u.s. imperialist state.

The mere discussion of the need for secure movement communication is necessary, so that we don't fool ourselves -- again -- into thinking and acting as if the struggle is not an actual war not only between two nations, but between two systems of social organization and political-economy.

We can now look back and see the extent to which we fooled ourselves as recently as the 1960s, the 1970s, and how we've continued to fool ourselves in the 1980s.

*No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory, and a knowledge of history, and has a profound grasp of the practical movement. (Mao, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," **SELECTED WORKS**, Vol. II.)*

In March, 1971, someone broke into the f.b.i. offices in Media, Pa., and liberated hundreds of documents and made them available to the public. For most of us, this exposure to heretofore secret documents constituted our initial factual knowledge of the u.s. government's counter-revolutionary initiative; specifically, factual knowledge of the f.b.i.'s "cointelpro" ("counter-intelligence program") operation against the oppressor nation "left," and the national liberation movements (New Afrikan and Puerto Rican).

The public distribution of these documents brought an end to most of the speculation regarding u.s. government surveillance, infiltration, and other counter-revolutionary activities against revolutionary forces inside the empire. Prior to this exposure, those who dared claim that such u.s. government activities were taking place, were charged with being "paranoid" or "romantic." And, the basis of such charges was that, "such things **CAN'T** happen in amerikkka," and that the nature of the struggle didn't demand such "extreme excesses," and "undemocratic responses" from the imperialist state.

We didn't "know" (that is, we accepted an external confirmation of something that our theory, knowledge of history, and grasp of the practical movement should have allowed us to conclude on our own), until the 1970s, that we needed secure movement communication in the 1960s!

And, despite additional exposures in the 1970s of u.s. government repression and counter-revolution, we continued to fool ourselves -- more about our own nature, and our ability to meet the demands of objective revolutionary contradictions, than about the nature of the enemy. We can't **REALLY** know the enemy -- and the nature of the struggle -- if we don't first know our selves.

Let's go forward by backing up, and refer to the passage from **SOLEDAD BROTHER**. There, George compared Malcolm, the Black Panther Party, and the movement in general, the Vietnamese movement and the Vietnamese Communist Party. But, he did so without making the detailed, concrete analysis that would offer explanations as to **WHY** the Vietnamese were "doing it just as well when they started," while we weren't 'really **PREPARED** for a fight.'

George implies that, unlike the Vietnamese, we had no **ARMED** "fighting style." But, George missed the mark, because the essential distinction between the Vietnamese and ourselves was/is one of **POLITICAL** fighting style. This style derives from national and class consciousness, ideo-theoretical development and training, and correct practice of all forms of struggle (armed and unarmed), on a daily basis.

Part of the reason that George failed to make this distinction is that his ideo-theoretical discipline wasn't that of the New Afrikan national liberation revolution. George identified himself as a communist -- but he wasn't a **NEW AFRIKAN** communist. In 1971, George was still (as most of us were), an amerikkkan, under the ideological influence of oppressor nation/CPUSA revisionism, and a reformist-integrationist theoretical perspective that liquidated the reality of the oppressed New Afrikan nation.

We weren't/aren't as "prepared" as the Vietnamese because, unlike us, they never lost their **NATIONAL** identity. Accordingly, they would never have opened and operated a local party

headquarters...in enemy-held territory...under conditions of open hostility between themselves and an enemy which was -- according to their own spiel -- an imperialist occupying force, with whom they were "at war."

We fooled ourselves -- because we weren't philosophically, ideologically, or theoretically prepared to wage a real protracted people's war, for national liberation and socialism, inside the u.s. empire.

We fooled ourselves by using anti-capitalist rhetoric when all we wanted to do was reform amerikkkan capitalism. We talked about "revolutionary nationalism" in an era where scientific socialism, i.e. communism, was clearly called for. But, being "revolutionary nationalists," rather than communists, allowed us to continue to embrace philosophical idealism in our symbolism, customs, and political practice; it allowed us to continue to justify reformist pursuits; we could continue to perpetuate patriarchal-feudal forms of social relations inside the nation, the movement, and our organized structures.

We fooled ourselves when we talked about the "nation," or the "colony," while only meaning the "community," or the "ghetto." We therefore could remain consistent with our "ethnic pluralist"/reformist program -- especially since we had no real interest in developing genuine national consciousness, or in properly structuring and employing our political military forces, so as to wage war on terrain where there are no linear "fronts" or rear bases.

We fooled ourselves into believing that since we were only struggling for "civil rights," there was no need for such things as lines and methods to secure our communications. As we "studied" the mounting exposures of u.s. government interception of our communications (i.e., mail interceptions; electronic surveillance on phones and in homes; infiltration of agents into our organizations, etc.), our focus wasn't on our own weaknesses and shortcomings, i.e., **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE WEAKNESSES ALLOWED STATE REPRESSION.**

The State's techniques, and most of its repressive-surveillance campaigns, were/are **MADE POSSIBLE** and **EASY** by the lack of consciousness, political maturity, and adequate security on the part of revolutionary forces. And, the priority must be placed, first, on consciousness and political maturity, because lines and methods don't fall from the sky.

Atiba Shanna -- N A C

NOTES ON SECURE COMMUNICATION

By Seldom Seen

THEME:

- A) The need to communicate.
- B) The need to communicate in a **SECURE** manner.
- C) The relation between secure communication, and an organization and/or movement's overall construction, security, and fighting capacity. That is: 1) You build the organization and/or movement while building the lines of communication; 2) If you unearth the lines of communication, you unearth the organization and/or movement, and can thereby manipulate it, or destroy it; 3) If the organization and/or movement lacks sufficient awareness of the importance of communication and its relationship to organizational science, and/or if it lacks the ability to communicate -- securely -- it thereby lacks the character of a true vanguard, and won't have the ability to survive and to fight effectively.
- D) The need to base initial communications for the new movement on a "hands and face" policy.

1A. We start with what should be most obvious: The people of the nation must communicate with each other. In this context, we mean **ALL** forms of, and purposes for, communication.

(The purpose of these notes is not to detail and analyze all such forms and purposes, especially with regard to the needs of the Afrikan national liberation struggle. But, we hope that this mere mention will be enough to inspire some readers to pursue the subject on their own initiative, and to link their efforts with others in the chain.)

The cadres and members of revolutionary organizations, and the organizations of the revolutionary Afrikan movement, must communicate with each other, and with all other people of the nation. In fact, organizations and the movement can't be formed, carry on effective activity, or develop, without regular and extensive internal and external communications. That is, cadres and members of revolutionary organizations must communicate with each other, and revolutionary organizations must communicate with each other (internal). And, cadres, revolutionary organizations, and the revolutionary movement must communicate with the people (external).

1B. At this point, the primary vehicle for the revolutionary movement's conduct of mass communications, for organizing New Afrikan revolutionary consciousness, educating that consciousness and providing it with ideology and program for action, remains the underutilized printed word:

The political reality of the black press has always been acknowledged, but seldom explored and rarely in political terms. While it is a truism that the press is a political instrument, the nature and the quality of its political effect is rarely comprehended. We too often tend to regard the press's sphere of political activity as being confined to positions taken on the editorial page, to the omission, diminution and bowdlerization of significant news. While such observations are correct in and of themselves, they do not identify the basic political reality of the press.

First and foremost, the press is an organizing device. It orders, shapes and directs the consciousness of its readers. V.I. Lenin's observations on the press are of significance here. In one context he remarked, "Revolution is a little review and a little screw" -- that is, agitation and propaganda plus the organizing activity of revolutionary cadre. On another occasion he stated, "As long as I have my PRAVDA [which he founded and edited] I do not need an organizer." The newspaper or periodical is not only a collection of facts and attitudes, it is a social experience, and its continuing publication is itself a political process.

For, the individual reading a newspaper or periodical is not only being exposed to a collection of facts and attitudes, he [or she] is undergoing a collective experience...part of a community of fellow readers who share the same experience...In this respect a newspaper or journal is an organizing device, one which shapes the collective consciousness of all its readers. It further creates a community among that readership, who are all simultaneously exposed to the same experience its pages provide. One could accurately regard a newspaper as a printed rally.

But the press is not only an organizing vehicle, it is also a major instrument of propaganda. Although the term "propaganda" has a negative connotation in this society, we must recognize that this derogation itself derives from propaganda, from the bourgeois myths of "impartial facts," "both sides of the story," "objective view," etc., with which we are indoctrinated and pacified. To propagandize means, literally, to propagate one's own vision of reality, to disperse it among a community of readers, viewers and listeners. As such, the press not only reaches a collective audience which is already responsive to its message, it also creates a new audience. With proper sensitivity and receptiveness to the needs, the desires, the dreams, the realities of its audience, it articulates and defines for its readership what that community has dimly felt, sensed or observed in privacy, declaring that collective consciousness in clear, cold, black type.

So the press functions as a continuous political process, one which organizes, propagates views and defines new directions, new problems and new solutions for its community. A given publication must not only find a particular chord of interest among its readership to give it an audience in the first place, it should also create new levels of consciousness based upon its first entry into the reading community's collective mind. Very often, whether a publication's circulation expands, stays fixed or dies depends upon its ability to understand correctly the consciousness of its readership, to respond to that consciousness and shape it further, and to anticipate the direction of the community's consciousness as social, economic and political conditions change. Furthermore, the press itself becomes an instrument of that change.

(Robert Chrisman, "Forward," **VOICES OF A BLACK NATION: POLITICAL JOURNALISM IN THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE**, ed. Theodore G. Vincent, Ramparts Press, 1973, pps. 15-16.)

1C. Among themselves, and with the masses, revolutionaries must discuss ideology and theory, strategy and tactics; information and ideas of all kinds, on all subjects, has to be shared, using the printed and recorded word, the airwaves, and the visual image. There has to be discussion, and coordination and assessment of work -- and it all has to be done in ways that inform, organize and mobilize the people, and yet prevent the opposition from "knowing" as much as possible.

II

2A. The lines and methods of internal and external communication must have layers of security that correspond to their character and functional needs. The lines and methods must be secure, yet flexible, so that they can operate, and be changed or **ABANDONED** when circumstances demand -- without endangering or dangerously lowering the functional capacity of any organization or of the movement.

(Particular attention to the subject of "abandonment" should be given, since it seems to be an area that has lacked attention up to now. In brief, if a comrad is captured, or if we learn that the imperialist state has acquired even the most seemingly insignificant bit of information about a unit's membership, activities, and methods, etc., then, at a bare minimum, **EVERYTHING** must be changed and/or abandoned, without hesitation, and without leaving any trace that could lead from the old, to the new.)

2B. We must communicate with each other, but in **SECURE** ways. By "secure" we mean:

-- That **ALL** vehicles, lines and methods of **BOTH** overt ("public") and covert communication should be protected as much as possible. We must "sanitize" **ALL** (mass) communications, so that the opposition receives no information about plans, ongoing discussions, structures, or individuals that will harm the struggle. Also, **ALL** (mass, and especially covert) communication vehicles, lines and methods, must be "covered," so as not to leave "traces." *

We urge cadres and activists not to take these points lightly. We remind ourselves: There is no such thing as "legal" anti-imperialism! There is no such thing as "public"/mass activity, of any form, that escapes the attention of the imperialist state, or that fails to pose dangers to **ALL** forms of revolutionary activity. We musn't be fooled by our own propaganda which holds "no connection bet-

ween the above-and-underground." Nor should we overlook the general problems created by a "public" press/communications vehicle that's open to various forms of sabotage by the enemy.

--All communications activity should adhere as closely as possible to the principles: a) We communicate with each other while making every effort to prevent anyone from knowing that we do. By "anyone," we mean **ANYONE** with no need to know; b) if it's not possible to prevent others from knowing that we can, or that we do communicate with each other, then we make every effort to prevent them from knowing **HOW** we can/do, and prevent them from knowing **WHEN** we can/do, or, when we have; c) if not possible to prevent the actual detection of our communications, then we make every effort to prevent anyone from knowing the content of our communications.

III

3A. The real key, though, to secure communications, and to organizational/movement/struggle security in general, is political consciousness. And, we don't mean this in a superficial way.

Cadres who place more emphasis on selecting particular types of weapons than they do on selecting the most appropriate phones to use, for instance, reflect the absence of the level of political consciousness necessary to generate revolutionary activity in general, and the consequent inability to provide for the security of that activity, in particular.

3B. By "political consciousness," we mean, on its most basic level, **CLASS** consciousness, revolutionary Afrikan proletarian consciousness. We mean revolutionary discipline, vigilance, and awareness.

But, This general political consciousness is not enough. Already, on the general level, more and more cadres are coming to understand that the struggle is not only about land and independence, but also about socialism; therefore, it's a struggle to overturn the idealist outlook and develop a New Afrikan dialectical and materialist outlook. It's a struggle to abandon all attitudes and practices based on petty-bourgeois conceptions of "legality" and reform, to be replaced by attitudes and practices based on conceptions of New Afrikan revolutionary communism, protracted people's war, and national liberation revolution.

We must move from the superficial understanding that we now have of being engaged in struggle with an entrenched, powerful, experienced and aggressive enemy.

We can't win a protracted people's war if we don't believe and act as though the war is a **PRESENT** reality.

Believing and acting as though the war is a present reality, means that we don't need a uniformed pig looking over our shoulders before we begin conducting **ALL** activity in the manner demanded by that presence. It doesn't matter whether or not they tap every phone, follow every activist twenty-four hours a day, infiltrate every group, open every piece of mail, etc. It's merely a matter of knowing that these things -- and more -- have been done, that they are being done now, and that the practice will become more extensive and costly to the struggle, in the future.

Once you learn, for instance, that similar repressive activities were carried out against "liberal" organizations and persons such as the NAACP and W.E.B. DuBois, and also against the Black Panther Party (as two examples of the general repression against the movement/struggle **HISTORICALLY**), then this should begin to add depth to your political consciousness. It should especially do so when we understand that, while such activities were taking place in their time and place, the "general level of political consciousness" was such that people didn't believe that it was happening, or that it could happen in "democratic" amerikkka.

Once you learn that they've opened **ANYONE'S** mail, the practical effect of that knowledge should be that you begin to act as though they have also opened yours, or that they will open yours -- at any moment.

The war is real. We are in occupied territory. Even the most "innocent" (mass) activity that claims to be part of struggle to liberate the nation and/or overturn empire, is actual revolutionary, **ILLEGAL** activity. The only doubt about that is the one in our own minds, manifested in our "routine" daily activity and the nonchalant way we conduct it.

3C. Building the vehicles, lines and methods of (secure) communication, is an integral part of building an organization and the new movement. You can't properly begin to build organization or movement without clear understanding of your self, your enemy, your environment and all its conditions and potentialities. It's this knowledge and understanding that guides you in building your lines of communication -- which, in effect, are the structural foundation of your organization. You have to pro-

vide security for your vehicles, lines and methods of communication, and build them in a way that will allow them, in their turn, to provide security for the organization, the movement, and the struggle.

It should go without saying that this point, as with all the others, is primarily directed toward future activity. This is because literally everything that exists now is effectively exposed, infiltrated, and encapsulated.

The state's agents, files and computers already have tens of thousands of names, addresses, bank and credit account numbers; "known associate" and "places frequented" lists; habits and methods of operation indexed and cross-indexed....

We have to acquire ever-more knowledge and understanding about ourselves and about the enemy. We have to look back upon the past (even yesterday), learn from mistakes and correct their political cause. We have to learn to abandon old forms, and to adopt new ones, without leaving foot-prints that make the effort meaningless.

IV

4A. At this point, a necessary means of transition involves adopting the principle of conducting the most sensitive communications "hand-to-hand, face-to-face." That is, as a rule, all sensitive written or packaged communications should be passed only from the hands of one comrad to the hands of another; all sensitive oral communications should be done face-to-face -- and all with some assurance of the absence of surveillance.

Operating according to this principle will at first present us with seemingly unnecessary and insurmountable obstacles. But it actually presents us with a very necessary situation, and forces us to begin re-building in more earnest, and more correctly.

Being required to communicate, but relying less on the phone and more on face-to-face contact with cadre...being required to communicate, but relying less on the u.s. mails and more on the hands of comrades ("security over speed"), forces us into more disciplined and vigilant overall behavior; forces us to think more creatively; forces us to act more as professionals.

4B. Adopting a "hand/face" principle is necessary as a transitional form, because it aids in the process of covering the tracks that would otherwise lead to new forms, and it aids the actual development of new forms.

For instance, in order to develop new principles and methods for more secure mass activity, the discussions and training on those methods, and the selection of the cadres, should be conducted in the most secure manner possible.

Further, since we must unavoidably carry on **SOME** communications by phone, mails, and other generally insecure methods, the discussion and training on those methods must also be conducted in the most secure manner possible.

Adopting the "hand-face" principle of communication requires that we develop more sophisticated and effective methods of organization; it forces us to begin moving beyond the limited circles of activists and cadres that has kept us repeating the tired phrase "there are no people," while there is a mass of people -- a mass that we have been tailing behind, isolated and unable to link ourselves into the patterns of their lives so as to generate a truly mass-based revolutionary movement and struggle.

And, the future definitely holds a climate where several levels of **ORGANIZED** liaison and courier activity will be absolutely necessary. Beginning to build the "hand-face" networks now, will constitute the creation of prototypes of future systems, and if done scientifically, will allow for "practice" in operating such systems, working out their weaknesses, and building on their strengths.

4C. We have a duty to 'conceal from the eyes of the world the relationships and contacts that we presently maintain, and those that we establish or are trying to establish.'

4D. Let's say that the greatest difficulty we encounter will relate to passing materials from one city to another, or from one state to another. One source of inspiration may be something similar to the following:

...It was possible to use an inanimate letter drop for the actual transportation of [written materials] over great distances. For example, agents might place...material at a designated spot on a railroad car or locomotive. Such material would be removed by confederates in another city and forwarded.

The above subjects were not taught so that the trainees would learn them by rote. They were given merely as principles and examples of what had been done. The students were constantly made aware that variations and adaptations as well as entirely new techniques, must be developed by them. All instruction was designed to sharpen the students' ingenuity, and to impress upon him or her the necessity for exercising the utmost judgment in calculating the risks inherent in a given activity.

(THE SECRET WAR REPORT OF THE OSS, ed. by Anthony Cave Brown, Berkeley Pub. Corp., 1976, p. 123.)

We may look upon such an example and see that with a few adaptations, it can be readily used, or kept in mind for more opportune situations; and, that it can have all sorts of possible applications. The point is that we begin to actively search for ways and means of transforming reality; to turn defense into offense; to use what we got until we get what we need, and as a means of getting what we need. Adapting the example above could possibly involve using an airplane rather than a train...or a Greyhound bus, an Allied moving van, a teamster-driven truck; it could involve using porters, cooks or conductors....

The "confederate" removing the material and forwarding it to another, doesn't necessarily have to be a comrad, but does necessarily have to be a supporter or sympathizer who has a level of consciousness, commitment and training sufficient for that task. The confederate is one of the workers we're always talking about organizing and mobilizing...one of the "people" and "masses"...one of the seeds we're supposed to be quietly planting, in an unobtrusive and systematic way.

Re-Build!

Seldom Seen - N A C

* The comrades who wrote the book, **WITHOUT A TRACE**, included in it the following remarks regarding the elimination of traces on revolutionary publications:

THE EVALUATION OF TRACES FOR THIS BOOK: OUR ANSWER TO THE POLICE

Dear Sirs:

Your documents expert will undoubtedly have noticed immediately that this brochure before you is a sample of offset printing. We can assure you that this is correct.

In an analysis of the ink, you will in the best case only be able to learn the brand name. Nothing definitive will come of this, however, since it is a color in common commercial use with which tons of paper are printed every day in Switzerland.

The same situation, unfortunately, exists with the paper. We have made an effort to buy it in small quantities over a long period of time in a variety of stores. Any businessman who would carry on his purchases in such an uneconomical way would immediately lose his job. For us, however, it means that you will not be able to trace us on the basis of the paper.

If, despite all this, you should find the print shop, it will not be possible for you to draw any positive proof from the offset press, because, as we have already mentioned, only common ink and paper were used, and, in the meantime, a quantity of other orders have been printed. In addition, the machine was thoroughly cleaned and newly adjusted (by the printer himself, of course). Furthermore, we know that the grippers on the impression cylinder can leave impression traces on the lead edge of the paper which are characteristic, but invisible to the naked eye. These traces would be sufficient for an identification of the machine, since every offset press leaves differently formed impression traces. In order to eliminate them, we have cut off 5 mm. on the appropriate side of the paper. By the way, the printer is one of us, so unfortunately he wouldn't help you either.

This brochure, as you have undoubtedly noticed, was cut in large stacks with a paper cutter from the original A3 format to an A5 format (standard paper sizes). Now we know that all paper cutters have tiny damaged spots which leave a very definite pattern on the cut edge of the paper. This pattern would allow you (assuming, of course, that you find the paper cutter) to prove that the brochure was cut with this particular paper cutter. Unfortunately, we must disappoint you on this point too, since the knife in question has already been very thoroughly sharpened.

So, the only things remaining, to give you a lead on traces, are the stitcher and the staples. Besides the possibility of determining the brand of the stitcher from the staples, it would also be possible for you to identify the stitcher used. When the staples come through the paper, the hammer mechanism leaves a very specific impression pattern on the back of the staples which could only be made by a very specific machine. Well, since we could get this machine at a quite reasonable price, we have destroyed it for reasons of security, along with the plates and the element of the typewriter.

The layout unfortunately suffered the same fate, even though we very carefully did the whole production with gloves. To save such things, however, would still be a security risk.

Furthermore, you can, of course, also save yourself the trouble of looking for fingerprints in the brochure itself. You will find none, neither left by the paper buyer, nor the warehouse person, nor the printer, nor the distributor. (We are, after all, a diligent firm.)

House searches are useless. First of all, you will undoubtedly look in the wrong apartments, and in the wrong political milieu (you don't know us as yet, ha ha!), and second of all, you wouldn't find anything among us anyway that would let you draw conclusions about this brochure. Of course, you will create a special search group as is always done in such cases, but will hardly be able to prevent exposing your efforts to unnecessary disappointments and frustrations.

There are no warehoused copies. The whole edition was distributed among comrades within two days (by the way, an enormous achievement).

So the only possibility practically left to you would be to confiscate a lot of copies from individual people, and so we hope that the comrades are careful about this little book. But this variation on your techniques would create such an uproar that more people would find out about this brochure which is also not necessarily in your interest.

In This Spirit We Greet You Cordially,
BACKGROUND GMBH

REFLECTIONS ON VICTOR SERGE'S WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT (STATE) REPRESSION

By Ata Kawali

PART ONE: Reflections.

1. Victor Serge quickly corrects a common misconception about repression. Most of us hold an image of imperialist repression formed by its spectacular, brutal and murderous results, i.e., the pre-dawn raid by police, the invasion by military forces, or the bombings and lynchings by the state's paramilitary KKK-type garrison troops.

In other words, we view a **PART** of the repressive process as if it were the whole, because this part is the most visible and impacting aspect, and the aspect most portrayed by the imperialist media as well as the media of the colonized nation.

But, Serge points out that, at the center of what everyone should know about the repression of the bourgeois-imperialist state -- what allows us to put the whole process into perspective -- is, **THE IMMEDIATE AIM** of all repressive forces. That immediate aim is, "more **to know**, than to repress. **To know**, in order to repress at the appointed hour, to the extent desired -- if not altogether." They can't repress what they don't know...about.

Therefore, the most immediate aim of revolutionary cadres and the revolutionary masses is, in this context, to allow the opposition to know as little as possible, about any thing, and any one.

We should understand that each time we perform the common act of opening our mouths and speaking, we're telling someone **SOMETHING** about ourselves which has the potential of becoming a weapon used against us by the state, should that information fall or be placed in their hands: the way we think; what we think about; our habits, likes and dislikes; what we've done, what we may do, and how we may do it, etc.

And, the body has a language of its own, too. That is, our movements can tell the opposition things about us that they want **TO KNOW**, in order to be able to repress us. Thus, if they can't watch our movements, they'll be denied information that could be used to repress us and/or our people.

The enemy's attention to such things is part of their science of repression. Paying due attention to such things should be part of the science of revolutionary cadres, and of the science of the revolutionary masses. We must share revolutionary science -- even as we discipline ourselves to stand vigilant over **ALL** our words and actions.

2. While building the cadre and mass bases that must share revolutionary science and realize it in practical struggle, we must see that if the foundations that we build upon are shaky, then everything that comes to rest upon them will be shaky, too.

If we allow cracks to develop in the very foundation of the new movement, in the consciousness and practice of cadres and masses, then corrosion will be a characteristic element in and of the structures, and our consciousness will be flawed.

A major cause of cracks in foundations is undeveloped consciousness, incorrect political line, and acknowledged or unrecognized liberalism and opportunism. These relate to the more apparent secondary causes, i.e., the "mistakes," complacency, and general failures to discipline our words and actions.

The discipline begins with experience, experiment, and the summation of these, which together form the core of the development of revolutionary science. In the words of one comrad, "*To 'Heighten Discipline' means, first and foremost, that We heighten our grasp and practice of the ideology, line and strategy of the organization, and of the Movement. To be 'under the discipline of,' or 'subject to the discipline of' any organization, but of the Army in particular, means that our comrades must heighten their efforts to understand our ideology, our political-military line, and our strategy; it means that We must accept these as our own; that We are therefore able to put them into practice, be responsible for them, and able to fight for them and defend them.*" (Shalimar B., "Against The Wind," **NOTES FROM A NEW AFRIKAN POW JOURNAL**, Book Six, 1980, p.7)

3. The tasks ahead, and the conditions under which they must be performed demand that we not take anything for granted -- least of all, our survival.

They know we're coming. In fact, they know far too much about those of us already here. And, unless we grasp this fact, in all its implications, we'll contaminate everything we touch, and expose everything we try to build.

We have to search for, and then apply, the consciousness, the skills and methods that will eliminate

-- or at least minimize -- the disadvantages incurred especially over the past ten years, which have resulted in the further disruption of the revolutionary forces.

4. Serge also helps to place the image of the "professional" revolutionary into focus. It could be said that his entire book is about the most essential of those "special qualities" that enable the professional revolutionary (i.e., cadres), to carry on "the struggle against the political police" -- the imperialist state's first line of **ARMED** defense.

This insight into the substantive composition of the (professional) revolutionary cadre, helps us keep in mind that:

A) The "political police" and other armed/intelligence forces of the state, are specialized defensive/offensive branches of the oppressive state, and to struggle against them is merely to engage the primary instruments of physical coercion and repression that the state has at its command. In other words, we must keep in mind that the **PRIMARY** struggle is against the state as a whole. In this way, we can avoid being diverted by the struggles against its parts. The enemy is the u.s. imperialist state, not merely the f.b.i., or the street cop that commits the most recent act of colonial terror.

Therefore, when we seek to raise consciousness about repression, we want to focus on the repression of the imperialist state, not merely the repression of the f.b.i. or the local police department.

B) The imperialist state also has other instruments of coercion and repression, which assume political, economic, and socio-cultural forms, rather than physical/armed forms. Relative to the oppressed nation, **ALL** institutions directly or indirectly controlled by the imperialist state are repressive, perform counter-revolutionary functions, and are no less forces to be engaged in combat by revolutionary cadres and masses, than are the "political police."

C) The State's repressive apparatus is also "professional," and is organized on a scientific basis, with, as Serge says, "special attention to their character, education, training, recruitment, intelligence, service record; their knowledge of the programs, statutes, origins and methods of the revolutionary parties, and the histories of leading members...."

5. Hunters must be able to track, and to know the habits and feeding grounds of their prey. Intelligent prey, on the other hand, must know as much as possible about the hunter, which includes knowing what the hunter knows about the prey. If the hunter is tracking the prey, then the prey must learn to avoid leaving traces and trails. If the hunter pursues the prey based on knowledge of the prey's habits and feeding patterns, then the prey must abandon those habits, avoid normal feeding areas, and maybe even change diets.

The opposition wants to know whatever possible -- whatever we allow them to know. They wanna know who you know; where you go; when; how often; how long you stay; what you say and do while there....

No thing is really insignificant. They are on their job even when we don't see or hear them (contrary to what most of us seem to believe), and, to avoid being caught off guard, coming up short, or having to improvise a quick lie or a quick getaway, we must be on our jobs even when we think we don't have to be.

6. Making the "need to know" principle part of our very being, should be understood to involve more than merely being vigilant with regard to clearly identifiable and visible repressive forces, and those kinds of situations and activity where the need is most obvious. The application of the "need to know" principle (basically, that no one needs to know any information other than that necessary to carry out their own activities), literally means that **NO ONE** inside organized structures know more than necessary, and it means absolutely no one outside organized structures know anything at all.

It often happens that, we begin working with people who are later uncovered as planted agents of the state, or who turn traitor. In such situations, we find ourselves faced not only with the exposure of names, addresses, details of actions, and other information that such persons acquired in the course of doing work that they were responsible for. We also usually find ourselves faced with the exposure of information that such people acquired from others who failed to practice "need to know."

7. Making "need to know" part of our being means getting into the habit of never volunteering information. **EXAMPLE:** A sister doing maintenance work at an office building is mopping the floor of one of the offices. An employee of the firm approaches the office, stops at the door upon seeing the wet floor, and asks, "Is that wax?" The sister says, "You can walk on it."

Now, if you ask this sister why she didn't say "yes," it was wax, or "No," it wasn't: "Well, in the first place," she'll say, with the air of a worker-teacher, instructing a cadre-pupil, "I told him just what he

needed to know. He **seemed** to need to know if he could walk on the floor. But then, too, he might have wanted to know if i **was** waxing it -- which they say i'm to do three times a week, but i don't. So, he left, without finding out from me, whether it was wax or not. And, if tomorrow or next year, i **have** to say what it was, i can say whatever i like, or whatever i need to say. Yep, i make a habit outta tellin' 'em just what they need to know, and no more."

8. Serge: "...the immediate aim of the police is more to know, than to repress. To know, in order to repress at the appointed hour, to the extent desired -- if not altogether."

The state and its repressive forces won't flash news bulletins each time they acquire a piece of information about revolutionary-mass forces. They won't publicize the names of those on today's surveillance sheet.

You may make a mistake, and in some cases you'll be, or become aware of it, before it results in tragic consequences. But, many times we make mistakes, but remain unaware of them -- until the door is kicked in (and sometimes even then we won't know exactly what lead them to us). The enemy won't let us know when we've made mistakes and/or when they discover them. They assume that if we become aware of the mistake, we'll repair any cracks, or cover any traces, and learn from the experience so that the error won't be repeated.

The opposition assumes that if we learn that an agent has been exposed, or that a cadre has turned traitor, or that a comrad under torture has yielded information -- the enemy assumes that in such situations we'll change whatever needs to be changed, and abandon whatever needs to be abandoned. If comrades are arrested and released, the enemy assumes that we will impose a "no contact" policy, whereby contact with that comrad by others above and below, are brought to an absolute minimum or stopped altogether. The enemy assumes that we know something about what we're doing, and that we take them, and ourselves, seriously.

They will get a piece of information and try to develop it to its deepest and widest limits, before deciding upon "the appointed hour." And, that's not always a pre-dawn raid. It's sometimes a stop by a traffic cop who "just happens" to notice a busted tail-light. Or, he may actually make the stop in ignorance, yet the grip of other branches seize the opportunity, when your info is run through the computer.

Sometimes the hour is seized when comrades carry out actions that run into obstacles. Under the cover of such mishaps, the enemy will move on names, faces, addresses, etc., that they already had, but they'll pretend to have only discovered them as a result of the failed action. In this way, the enemy tries to keep us in the dark about the extent of the information they already have, and they try to protect the sources of their information. They will always try to keep us ignorant as to how well they've been doing their job of infiltrating, turning, tapping, following, picture snapping, questioning, checking and cross-checking, indexing and cross-indexing....

Sometimes, the appointed hour arrives, but they deliberately "miss" someone. They throw the net only so far when making arrests...or, they release someone -- but they're still interested in **KNOWING**. They hope that those "missed" by the net, and/or those released after an arrest, will become unconscious "breeders" and blind informers, by immediately becoming active again. In this way, we'd lead the state to more information on cadres they likely already knew about, and to names, faces, addresses, and methods, that they didn't know about, or didn't have the full scoop on.

They will also hope that **NEW** contacts will be made by unconscious breeders and blind informers; they will hope that **NEW** resources will be tapped, **NEW** networks established -- all, exposed from the very beginning. They will hope that we won't perform what Lenin calls "the duty of a revolutionist to conceal from the eyes of the world the relationships and contacts which [he or she] maintains, which [he or she] is establishing or trying to establish."

9. Serge: "Faced by this wily adversary, powerful and cunning, a communist party lacking clandestine organization, a party which keeps nothing hidden, is like an unarmed [person], with no cover, in the sights of a well-positioned [hunter]. Revolutionary work is too serious to be kept in a glasshouse. The party...must organize so as to avoid enemy vigilance **AS FAR AS POSSIBLE**; so as to hide its most important resources **ABSOLUTELY**...so as to train our comrades in the behavior which is demanded by these imperatives."

"Clandestine organization" should be understood in at least two ways: 1) the organization of the type of political and military structures usually considered "underground"; 2) the type of political, economic, and socio-cultural activity which, while considered "public," or "legal," is nevertheless **REVOLUTIONARY** activity, and should be conducted with an attitude and methods characterized by the present reality of the war.

We must understand: It becomes a criminal act when cadres and activists continue to think and act as though they are protected by the u.s. constitution, state and local statutes, and the myths and lies

fed the settlers and colonies of the empire about “amerikkkan democracy,” and other nonsense. So-called bourgeois legality and morality died when the Portuguese landed on the African continent, and when Columbus landed in the “Indies.” The most “innocent”/“public” or “reformist” activity, is actual, or potential, revolutionary activity, and real revolution is illegal in amerikkka, and too serious to be kept in a glasshouse.

There is no such thing as “legal, anti-imperialist struggle,” or “legal, national liberation revolution.” The opposition moves on the belief that there are, or that there will soon be, connections between “public” and clandestine anti-imperialist, revolutionary activity. It is their job to discover any such connections – and they take their job seriously. So, they tap anti-imperialist phones, tape anti-imperialist speeches and snap the pictures of those who deliver such speeches. They also follow “public” activists, and otherwise keep close tabs on **ALL** their activity, no matter how “legal.”

This is exactly what’s meant by “the party must organize so as to avoid enemy vigilance **AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.**” Revolutionary cadres and the revolutionary masses organize all forms of activity -- political, economic, socio-cultural – among all classes, groups, and strata. Enemy vigilance must be avoided **AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** in **ALL** mass, “public,” and so-called “legal” work.

10. When it’s said that “the party must organize so as to hide its most important resources **ABSOLUTELY,**” This isn’t limited to financial or material resources, nor to the stashing of such resources behind locked, secret doors.

What are our most important resources? Our cadres; supporters and sympathizers; networks; contacts and relationships. **THE PEOPLE ARE OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCES.** The vast majority of our resources are “public” -- they work nine-to-five; live in housing projects; attend school; receive some form of welfare payments; some (not enough as yet) hold sensitive positions in the enemy state apparatus, its academic, media, business and service institutions, and serve in its police and armed forces.

11. To say that “the party must organize so as to train our comrades in the behavior which is demanded by these imperatives,” means that training in the consciousness and methods of “combating the political police” is part of the organizing process, beginning at the stage of cadre “spotting” and recruitment.

All organized structures must fashion an apparatus which specializes in such training, using detailed and systematic methods. This apparatus must be responsible for on-going study, drawing lessons from our own experience and from the experiences of others. It should also coordinate the periodic assessment of cadres, structures, from the standpoint of security, conducting and testing the training and raising its level, in the daily activities and struggles.

There must also be training of supporters and sympathizers, primarily through the conduct of political education. We shouldn’t take for granted that people will know the enemy and the methods used to infiltrate, disrupt and divert mass organizations.

We must have a secure movement and struggle, not merely secure vanguard organizations, collectives, and units. We need an impenetrable wall of mass consciousness, an entire revolutionary class that knows about the purpose and methods of state repression, and how to defend against it, and how to turn defense into offense.

12. Some of the things we do, and some of the structures we build, must be “hidden” clandestinely, in the commonly understood meaning of the term. Other things we do, and other structures built, contacts made, relationships established, etc., while taking place in “public” view, must be done in a more-or-less clandestine manner, so that ultimate purposes aren’t undesirably noticeable, connections aren’t exposed, and contacts are subtle and unobserved.

PART TWO: Good Practice Is The Result Of Good Practice.

1. There was once a collective of aspiring New Afrikan revolutionaries, engaged in study, and one day the subject was “learning how to follow people and detect when you’re being followed.” One of the would-be revolutionaries saw no need for this type of study, got angry, and said that he was a revolutionary, and not an espionage agent.

Strangely, this study session took place in the late 1960’s several days after the bloods had read an article which mentioned that the state was following such people as Stokely Carmichael, and placing beepers on their cars.

Other members of the collective tried to make the point that learning how to follow people, and to be able to detect and allude similar surveillance upon one self, is an essential element in the training of all revolutionaries, whether they do "public" or "clandestine" work. Such training is part of the more practical side of the revolutionary **SCIENCE** practiced by the "professional" revolutionary.

2. Serge has a chapter on "Simple Advice To Revolutionaries," and he points out that his suggestions aren't "a complete code of the rules of clandestinity, nor even (a complete code) of the precautions to be taken by revolutionaries. They contain no sensational recipe. They are simply basic rules. Strictly speaking, common sense should be enough to suggest them. But unfortunately, long experience teaches us that it is not out of place to spell them out. Carelessness on the part of revolutionaries has always been the best aid the police have."

3. Serge's advice, sprinkled with a few bits of our comments: 'At the start, all surveillance is from the outside. This always involves following the individual, getting to know their activities, movements, contacts, and then finding out their plans. "Tailing" sections are developed by all police forces....In the most serious cases, two agents spied on the same person unbeknown to each other; their reports were cross-checked and used to complement each other....These daily reports were sent to the police to be analyzed by specialists. These officers...were dangerously perceptive. They would draw up tables showing a person's deeds and actions, the number of visits, their length, regularity, etc. Sometimes, these tables brought out the importance of one member's relationships and his probable influence....Every revolutionary must regard himself as being permanently followed: on principle, the revolutionary should never neglect to take the necessary precautions to prevent being followed. The simplest rules are: 1) don't go directly to where you are going; 2) turn down a deserted street to check whether you are being followed; 3) when in doubt, turn back; 4) if you notice that you are being followed, jump on some kind of transport and then change.'

Again, we must stress the importance of **CONSCIOUSNESS**. Security is not simply a matter of magical methods, especially when cadres only learn even the simplest methods in a mechanical manner, and by rote. Knowing the methods without having the theoretical perspective that allows them to be used in the most appropriate manner, is sometimes worse than not knowing the methods at all.

Another thing to keep in mind: It's not a matter of being paranoid when it comes to employing such methods, nor is it a question of whether or not the opposition is actually following you. It's a matter of making a habit of being serious, apply science, being disciplined and vigilant. The enemy won't come up to you and say, "Watch yourself today, we're playing for real, and watching every move you make."

More on what we mean by stressing the importance of **CONSCIOUSNESS**: It happens that we got so-called vanguard forces who still --believe it or not -- think that the time to get serious about "security" is after the state announces that "civil liberties" are being suspended, or that martial law is being imposed. But, by that time, it's too late to start employing security methods, or to begin developing a more developed consciousness. By the time such an announcement is made (assuming that it will be), the lists of those to be arrested have already been compiled!!!!

So, one aspect of what we mean by **CONSCIOUSNESS**, from the revolutionary perspective, is that, folks have lived in amerikkka all their lives, and studied and been part of the development of struggle against the state, but they still have the consciousness of bourgeois reformists, slaves, adventurers, and dilettantes. They still have the consciousness of the petty-bourgeoisie, even while claiming to wage revolutionary warfare.

4. 'Write down as little as possible. It's better not to write. Don't take notes on sensitive subjects: it's better sometimes to forget certain things than to take them down in writing. With that in mind, practice remembering addresses, names, etc. Where **NECESSARY**, take notes which are intelligible only to yourself. Everyone can invent ways of abbreviating, inverting, transposing....With correspondence, take into account that your mail **WILL** be opened. Say as little as possible and try to make yourself understood only by the addressee (and, the **BEST** way to do this is by pre-arrangement, i.e., during face-to-face discussions with comrades, discuss and decide upon the methods to be used). Mention no third persons unless absolutely necessary (and, if this is to be done, it should be done according to pre-arranged methods, so that the third persons should be mentioned only by code names known only to the addressee)....Avoid all details about places, work, dates, and people....Learn to resort, even without prior arrangement, to what should always be very simple stratagems for trivializing information. Don't say, for example, that Comrad Yusef has been arrested, but that Yusef has suddenly fallen ill. And, of course, "Yusef" will not be the comrad's real or work name, but a code name used only between yourself and the addressee. Each comrad should have as many names as necessary, and these names should be known only to those with a need to know.

In view of the fact that some correspondence between most comrades must take place, there must be face-to-face contact between such corresponding comrades so that the details of their exchanges can be arranged between them.

It's also much better that each comrade have different systems for corresponding with each comrade, than to have a single system for corresponding with each comrade. In the event of the state discovering the system used with one comrade, they won't be able to use that knowledge immediately against other comrades.

5. 'Beware of telephones -- **ALL** telephones. Never say **ANYTHING** over the phone that you wouldn't say to a police officer. Don't make appointments over the phone, except in pre-arranged, coded terms. And, when using such codes, make them sound as normal as possible, that is, don't have them sound as if they are obviously codes, or jagged parts of conversations, etc.'

6. 'Make it a principle that, in illegal activity (which is to say, in all activity), a revolutionary should know only what it is useful or necessary to know; and that it is often dangerous to know or to tell more. The less that is known, the greater the security. Be on guard against the inclination to give away confidences. Know how to keep quiet; keeping quiet is a duty to the party and to the struggle. Know how to forget of your own accord what you should not know. It is a mistake, which may have serious consequences, to tell your closest friend, mate, or most trustworthy comrade a party secret which is not indispensable for them to know. Sometimes you may be doing them wrong; because you are responsible for what you know, and it may be a heavy responsibility. Don't take offense or get annoyed at another comrade's silence. This isn't a sign of lack of confidence, but rather of fraternal esteem and of what should be a mutual consciousness of revolutionary duty.'

7. 'In the event of arrest: At all costs keep cool. Don't let yourself be intimidated or provoked. Don't reply to any question without having a lawyer present and without previously consulting with your lawyer. If possible, the lawyer should be a comrade, or at least someone who has a significant level of political consciousness. If it's not possible to have a lawyer, don't say anything without really thinking about it. As a matter of principle: **SAY NOTHING**. Trying to "explain" yourself is dangerous: you are in the hands of professionals who are able to get something out of you every word. Any "explanation" gives them valuable documentation. Lying is extremely dangerous: it is difficult to construct a story without its defects being too obvious. It is almost impossible to improvise. Don't try to be more clever than them: the relationship of forces is too unequal for that. **NEVER CONFESS**. When you deny something, deny it firmly. The enemy is capable of anything. Don't let yourself be surprised or disconcerted by the classic: "We know everything!" This is never the case. It is a bare-faced trick...Don't be intimidated by the eternal threat: "You'll pay for this!" What you'll pay for is a confession, of a clumsy explanation, or falling for tricks and moments of panic; but whatever the situation of the accused, a hermetically sealed defense, built up out of much silence and few definite affirmations or denials, can only help. Don't believe a word of another classic ploy: "We know everything because your Comrade So and So has talked!" Don't believe a word of it, even if they try to prove it. With a few carefully selected clues, the enemy is capable of feigning a profound knowledge of things. Even if So and So did "tell all," this is a further reason to be doubly circumspect. Again: **SAY NOTHING. SIGN NOTHING.**'

8. 'Before the police and courts: Don't try to establish the "truth" -- there is no truth in common between the oppressed and the oppressor. Their truth is not ours. Before the judges of the oppressor, the Comrade does not have to account for any act. The Comrade can turn the courtroom into a school, or, the Comrade can keep silent.'

9. "A supreme warning: Be on your guard against conspiracy mania, against posing, adopting airs of mystery, dramatizing simple events, or 'conspiratorial' attitudes. The greatest virtue in a revolutionary is simplicity, and scorn for all poses...including 'revolutionary' and especially conspiratorial poses...."

Re-Build!

Ata Kawali - NAC

**SO THAT WE DON'T FOOL OURSELVES -- AGAIN:
NOTES ON A MOVEMENT POLICY FOR (SECURE) COMMUNICATIONS**

By Seldon Seen

*"Policy is the starting-point of all the practical actions of a revolutionary party, and manifests itself in the process and the end-result of that Party's actions. A revolutionary party is carrying out a policy whenever it takes any action. If it is not carrying out a correct policy, it is carrying out a wrong policy; if it is not carrying out a given policy consciously, it is doing so blindly. What we call 'experience' is the process and the end-result of carrying out a policy. Only through the practice of the people, that is, through experience, can we verify whether a policy is correct or wrong and determine to what extent it is correct or wrong. But people's practice, especially the practice of a revolutionary party and the revolutionary masses, cannot but be bound up with one policy or another. Therefore, before any action is taken, we must explain the policy, which we have formulated in the light of the given circumstances, to Party members and to the masses. Otherwise, Party members and the masses will depart from the guidance of our policy, act blindly, and carry out a wrong policy." (Mao, "On The Policy Concerning Commerce and Industry," **SELECTED WORKS**, Vol. IV.)*

THEME:

- 1) Deepening our understanding of "policy," and its relation to theory and practice.
- 2) The need for a policy on intra-organizational, inter-organizational, and movement-mass communications.
- 3) The need for a policy to help increase the security of **ALL** communications.

1. What is a "policy"?

A) A policy is a political line or formal position, formed to guide attitudes and actions regarding general issues (i.e., education; homophobia; labor; electoral politics, etc.), and/or to guide attitudes and actions with regard to particular issues.

B) A policy is a clear vision of a goal; the definite choice of a path to be taken in pursuit of that goal. A policy guides the selection of specific methods and/or acceptable procedures to be used along the path; it helps determine the decisions which have to be made as unforeseen situations arise. We're carrying out a policy even when we decide not to take certain actions, or when we decide to remain "neutral" on certain issues.

Again: "Policy is the starting-point of all the practical actions of a revolutionary party, and manifests itself in the process and the end-result of that Party's actions. A revolutionary party is carrying out a policy whenever it takes any action. If it is not carrying out a correct policy, it is carrying out a wrong policy; if it is not carrying out a given policy consciously, it is doing so blindly."

2. Deepening our general understanding of "policy," and the particular policies formed in regard to the issues of practical daily struggles, begins when we realize that policies don't fall from the sky, and that one need not be a member of a party formation or of any organized structure before the principle applies to their actions.

While all organized structures -- no matter how small -- must have policies, even the practical actions of individuals must follow the imperatives of conscious or unconscious, correct or incorrect, policies. Because, policies are specific, concrete manifestations of ideology and theory.

While policies are "formulated in the light of the given circumstances," those given circumstances are always examined in the light of a particular ideo-theoretical outlook. And, that outlook is either materialist, or idealist; either dialectical, or mechanical and metaphysical; either based on recognition of the oppressed New Afrikan nation, or based on the liquidation of the nation, and on bourgeois-integrationist politics and outlook.

In all cases, policy formulation involves answering questions and solving problems raised by practice, i.e., theory. Formulating policy and correctly carrying out policy requires analysis of past practice and conditions; present circumstances; the taking into account of the connections between inter-related phenomena; choosing from among alternatives and weighing probabilities, etc.

Formulating and carrying out revolutionary policy requires the use of revolutionary science, applied from the standpoint of the theory and strategy of New Afrikan national liberation revolution.

3. Individuals must have clear policy to guide the communication between themselves and others; organizations need clear policy to guide their internal communications, and to guide their communications with other organizations; the revolutionary movement needs clear policy to guide even its mass/"public" communications.

Don't assume that because you don't discuss/plan "illegal" activities in your "routine" correspondence, then the state will take no interest in that correspondence. The simple fact that you are **CONSCIOUS**, and **ACTIVE**, and in touch with other conscious and active people, is reason enough for the state to take an interest in your activities and your communications.

They will take a heightened interest in the communications of organizations. If it's incorrect, for instance, to make appointments over the phone, it's also incorrect to make appointments in written communications.

Numerous state repressive agencies subscribe to the mass, "public," newspapers, magazines, and journals of the revolutionary movement. These publications are usually filled with all kinds of information that's useful to the state in its intelligence/repressive functions.

4. The need for clear policy on all levels of communications should become more evident when we consider that contradictions have sharpened over the past twenty years, they are sharpening now, and will sharpen even more.

The need for greater communications, and for more security on such communications, is coming at a time when conducting it is becoming more complex, more technical, and more difficult to do **UNDER A STATE OF PERMANENT REPRESSION**. That is, repression doesn't come and go, it merely becomes more or less **EVIDENT**, as its "spectacular episodes" are spaced closer or farther apart. **REPRESSION IS A PERMANENT BLANKET COVERING THE ENTIRE MOVEMENT.**

You may think this isn't so, because you don't notice the difficulty you have trying to breathe. This is because you've become accustomed to the reality and the weight of the blanket. Long gaps between "spectacular episodes" have given many of us the impression that the blanket had been "pulled back" or "lifted." But it's been here all the time, and we've learned to move under its weight, and now consider this state of repression to be "normal."

Only when an arrest is made, or when the state itself begins to make noises about "nipping terrorism in the bud," or about some "new data bank," etc. -- only then do we begin to talk about a "new" wave of repression, as if the "old" one has somehow passed on, spent itself, or was crushed by the u.s. congress after the watergate hearings. That's bourgeois -- not revolutionary -- consciousness. That's fooling ourselves -- again.

Re-Build!

Seldom Seen -- NAC

THE GREATER NEED -- AN OPEN LETTER

By Iyapo Tsukama

Revolutionary Greetings, Comrad:

In regard to your questions re: "the need to concretely address practical tasks," i think we should rephrase the question before we address it. Because i share your belief in the need to direct more mental and physical energy toward a larger number of practical tasks. And, i also believe that the mental energy (theory) has to be more "concrete." So, why haven't i addressed a larger number of practical tasks, as concretely as possible?

Because, i believe that one task has to be discussed and realized before all others: We have to secure new lines of communication -- and these must be preceded by new forms of thought.

There are "practical tasks," and there are "practical tasks." Tasks that are "practical" in one situation, or in one period or stage of struggle, may not be entirely practical in another situation, period or stage of struggle.

Tasks don't fall from the sky. That is, they are aspects of objective reality, given particular shape, definition and importance, through the scientific analyses of the revolutionary vanguard. The vanguard confronts a large number of tasks at any one time, and it must decide which of these tasks are primary, and which are secondary. So, tasks are not only defined, but come to be pursued, on the basis of correct or incorrect political lines, correct or incorrect ideological and theoretical outlooks.

It can't be a simple matter of the movement's not being engaged in enough "practical tasks" that is causing all our present difficulties. The problem is that the tasks being pursued at the moment are not connected to correct theory and line. And, one aspect of that incorrect theory and line, are the problems that have lead to the contamination of all present lines and methods of communication.

The state knows more about what's happening with the movement and its organizations than the people do, and they know before the people do. Since they have so much information, and have it in such a timely manner, they are able to disrupt "practical tasks" before they can get off the ground!

As i take up my present communications, i'm struggling to base my practice on the evolving general line of the **NEW** movement, symbolized by the slogan, "Re-Build." i'm also struggling to base my practice on the developing policy regarding secure lines and methods of communication. Secure lines and methods of communication are integral to building new, secure, and effective movement/organizational apparatus, consistent with the **NEW** movement's ideology and theory, strategy and tactics.

And, the most immediate problem we confront in this effort, is trying to communicate with people who haven't yet developed new levels of consciousness. Before you can practice new methods, on a movement-wide basis, the people who constitute that movement must know that it's truly a new season of struggle, and that the movement that they have identified with up to now, is dying, passing away, giving rise to a new movement that's being built from the bottom up.

So, to state it simply: i believe we must have new, secure lines and methods of communication **BEFORE** we address ourselves to a larger number of practical tasks. The more "concretely" we discuss such tasks, the greater the need for new and secure lines and methods are, as a prerequisite. And, again, no serious work can begin on the construction of these new lines and methods until we bring the new vision into sharper focus.

Therefore, i think the major task -- the greater need -- is for us to build these new lines and methods. And, i think this task begins with general discussion (the discussion **HAS** to be general until the lines are built), of the why's and how's of the lines and methods; the relation such lines and methods have to building new movement and organization; and how -- **THEREBY** -- we'll be more assured of realizing all other practical tasks.

What are the "lines" of (secure) communications? They're products of integrating theory with practice, to create direct and indirect vehicles, systems and routes used to send and receive information. Lines of (secure) communication should be designed, constructed, and operated, with the aim of preventing their detection, their disruption, and the interception of information flowing through them.

It should be especially kept in mind that **ALL** communications of a revolutionary movement are vital, and that communication lines "aboveground" demand security measures no less than "underground" lines.

Why do we need **NEW** (secure) lines of communication? Because we don't want the enemy to know who we are, where we are, or what we're thinking, planning, or doing. They may know we're coming, but we don't want to let them know from which direction we're coming, at what rate of speed, what we're bringing with us, or how much of a load we're carrying.

More particularly, we don't even want to let them know that we're talking about the need for new lines of communication. Because, if they find this out, they'll have already taken the first step toward disrupting all potential organizational and movement developments. If they do find out that we're discussing this need, the weight then falls on us to prevent them from gaining any additional knowledge.

We need **NEW**, secure lines of communication because the old movement is passing away, and the old lines and methods of communication must pass away with it. We can't "re-group" or re-vitalize a movement which is already in the latter stages of decomposition. We can't build a new movement with lines and methods of communication (to say nothing of theory and other forms of practice) that are **EFFECTIVELY** detected, intercepted, disrupted, and contaminated. Nor can we build a new, secure movement with people who are not only blind to this reality, but they're also deaf and dense.

We need **NEW, SECURE**, lines of communication because they have to correspond with the nature of the struggle at the present and future periods; with the character of the movement; and with the scope of the vanguard's practice.

By "nature of the struggle," i mean it's a real war, twenty-four hours a day, we have to get deeper into the meaning of this reality for the ways we think and act about all things.

We are an internal colony, which means that we struggle on occupied territory...the revolutionary masses and vanguard forces are totally surrounded by repressive, occupying forces. There really is no such thing as a "legal" or "public" mass front, and i don't know why we find that so hard to understand!

By "character of the movement," i mean we begin to act as if there is no such thing as "legality," and that all activity "aboveground" actually rests on a foundation of "illegal," anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, national revolutionary/scientific socialist struggle.

By "scope of the vanguard's practice," i mean the New Afrikan, communist vanguard, will base itself on the nature of the struggle, and the character of the movement, as it carries out all its political and military practice. It will build a "clandestine infrastructure" for **MASS** work, for "legal" and "aboveground" activity, just as for all other forms of activity.

You build your organization and your movement **AS** you build your lines of communication, as you form your relationships with the masses, and as you establish contacts in workplaces, with other organizations, at the schools, in the welfare offices, etc. The lines of communication are the life-blood of the organization, its veins, the organs through which it inhales and exhales. When the state aims to kill or disrupt revolutionary organizations and the revolutionary movement, they begin by trying to "stop the breathing" or "start the bleeding."

How do we **BEGIN** to build new (secure) lines of communication? Since we're merely discussing the need for new and secure lines, but don't have them yet, it wouldn't be in our interests to go into particulars.

With that said, i think the first step toward **LEARNING** to build new lines, as well as toward actually beginning to build them, is to reexamine our individual and collective practice, "recent events," and existing lines and methods. This should be done along with more scientific examinations of the experiences, lines and methods used by others, in other times and places -- especially the underground/resistance movements in europe during the second imperialist war. We must first be convinced that new lines are necessary, before we can begin to build them.

Again, all this has to be done under the guiding light of theory and ideological perspective. You can't approach the task with the outlook of a petty-bourgeois New Afrikan reformist in revolutionary garb, i.e., with the perspective of one who actually believes that they're carrying on political activity that's "constitutionally protected."

The second, related step, is to learn more and learn better, why sending and receiving information/communications of **ALL** types is important to us, and why detection and interception is important to the enemy. i stress "all types" of information/communication, because one of the major errors of the old movement's theory was to generally regard only information and lines of communication related to "underground" activities as requiring measures of security.

Next, gain greater clarity on the relation between theory and the construction and operation of communications, and security in general. Again, practical tasks don't fall from the sky, and the decisions

on how to perform these tasks are made either scientifically and consciously, or spontaneously and consistent with a bourgeois outlook. This insight will tell us more about how we misused, or incorrectly designed and operated, old systems and routes; it'll help us spot actual or potentially contaminated lines, and thus allow us to avoid them; and it will help us build the kind of lines we need.

In short, building new lines of (secure) communications begins with analysis, with a learning process. And, as we learn, we begin to build.

What are the "methods" of new (secure) communications? They're products of integrating theory with practice, to create the technique used to **BUILD** the systems and routes: to **OPERATE** them; to **TRAVEL** (the routes); to send and receive information (including meetings and discussions **ANYWHERE**); the methods used to avoid surveillance, detection, interception; etc.

We apply methods to all forms of communication -- because we know that there's no such thing as "freedom of information" in amerikkka.

We should keep in mind that, while we've emphasized the practical aspects of building new lines and methods of communication, we have to avoid pursuing these tasks blindly, i.e., practice without thought/theory is blind. To view and pursue **ANY** practical task outside the context of political line and theory will ultimately lead to failures. We can't develop new lines and methods of communication until we first raise our consciousness to higher levels, and develop new theory and strategy for protracted, peoples war.

"Clandestinity" must come to characterize the entire movement, i.e., a "mass-based underground" is what we need; a resistance movement in territory occupied by settlers who regard all "anti-" struggles as threats to the continued existence of the empire. We want to build a New Afrikan movement where "leadership" can't be easily identified, because "leaders" will be the owner of the corner grocery store, the secretary, the phone repairperson, the physical education teacher, etc. -- and they'll only "surface" after we've liberated some territory!

Re-Build!

Iyapo Tsukama -- N A C

SPEAR AND SHIELD PUBLICATIONS
1340 W. IRVING PARK, SUITE 108
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60613